

Dear Mrs. Tarshis,

Scared, tired, and cold. I was being carried across the street in my mother's arms. Everybody was running in the same direction, toward the neighbor's house, and I didn't know why. Suddenly, I was shoved into a tiny storage closet with fourteen people and three dogs. I was clueless why I should panic, but I knew I wanted to. Then I realized what my mother had told me before running across the street, a tornado was stirring, and we were right in the path.

In the beginning of *I Survived the Japanese Tsunami, 2011*, I was immediately questioning the "ripple in the huge Pacific Ocean" that turned into the "monstrous wall of water." I wasn't sure whether it was a small storm, or the terrifying tsunami described on the cover. I was suddenly taken back to my memories of the 2005 Tornado.

When I was three years old, a terrifying tornado stormed through my hometown, Newburgh, Indiana. The tsunami that threatened Shogahama and most of Japan caused Ben to have to escape a ferocious beast, the tsunami. When the tsunami in Shogahama swept Ben up, he was frightened and his mind was swirling. I felt the exact same way, my thoughts becoming the tornado that I was afraid of.

Even after years have passed, I still think about what happened on November 6, 2005. When I read your book, I learned that life must go on. Through the story, you told me that disasters will happen, but you aren't put into this world to dread the bad things in life. You are put into this world to love every good moment. You must put your past behind you and live in the present. Your book taught me this through a character, Ben. Chapter after chapter, Ben's experience started to turn into mine.

Even though your book is fiction, it taught me a real life lesson. I have always been told, "The past is the past" and "Live in the present." I thought that I knew this, but until I read your book I never truly understood what they meant.

The last words in *I Survived the Japanese Tsunami, 2011* got me thinking. "And together they began their journey home." After I climbed out of a cramped closet I was in during the tornado, I had to carry on. I had to put that memory in the back of my mind. I will journey on and remember the day, but won't dread it.

*I Survived the Japanese Tsunami, 2011* reminds me that I can do anything, no matter what. Ben was petrified when he was drowning, but he remembered something that encouraged him to keep going and do it with all of his strength, his dad. Therefore, when I need encouragement, I will think of your book. Thank you for encouraging and reminding me to live in the present, not the past.

Sincerely,

Sara Purdue